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U.S. NEWS & WORLD REPORT
 3 March 1980

Department of Dirty Tricks, Soviet Style

While Russia's diplomats talked peace and reconciliation, her secret agents were busy concocting bogus documents to blacken America's image. A new CIA report spells out what happened.

Now coming to light is the most complete disclosure yet of how the Soviet Union—even when détente was in full flower—systematically staged “dirty tricks” to discredit the U.S. among its allies and other nations.

Details of the secret campaign were made public on February 19 by the House Intelligence Committee. The panel released a report by the Central Intelligence Agency that was sent to lawmakers as congressional debate heated up over proposals to give the CIA a freer hand to conduct covert operations of its own.

The study portrays a clandestine anti-U.S. propaganda drive that started after World War II and reached a peak in intensity and sophistication during 1978 and 1979, the period in which the U.S. and the Soviet Union were wrapping up a new strategic-arms-limitation treaty.

Among other things, Moscow is accused of using forged documents in various attempts to link the U.S. with terrorism around the world, including the 1978 assassination of former Italian Premier Aldo Moro.

U.S. bureaucratise duplicated. The CIA says the Soviets have made near-flawless forgeries of everything from secret U.S. Army field manuals to classified State Department communiqués. Not only have they obtained the proper inks, paper, printing presses and letterheads, but Soviet experts have become masters at duplicating the writing style of American bureaucrats.

In the 105-page report, complete with voluminous documentation, the CIA says the Soviets called a halt to their dirty tricks for four years in the mid-1970s for reasons that remain unclear. But by 1978, the Kremlin had streamlined its foreign-propaganda apparatus into an International Information Department, bankrolled it heavily and, as a mark of its new importance, installed as its boss a longtime crony of President Leonid Brezhnev's.

The agency reports directly to the Politburo and works hand in glove with the KGB, the Soviet spy agency, as it carries out covert “disinformation” operations that rely heavily on forgery. The CIA believes that as many as 50 KGB technicians are detailed to a forgery squad.

According to the CIA's reckoning, the Soviets in 1979 poured at least 200 million dollars into a variety of special campaigns—using both propaganda and covert operations—to isolate the U.S. from its friends. “Moscow does not see any basic incompatibility between its official policy of expanding bilateral relations with Washington and practicing dirty tricks,” John McMahon, the CIA's deputy director of operations, testified before the panel. “The Soviet Union's willingness to conduct its foreign policy in accor-

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Aldo Moro kidnapping in Italy. Communist with ties to Soviet and Cuban intelligence agencies—published in two Madrid newspapers an article citing the manual as evidence of U.S. involvement with the Italian Red Brigades, the terrorist killers of the Christian Democratic leader.

Excerpts from the forged manual and the article were widely reprinted in Europe, especially in Italy. “Within days of the Moro kidnapping, the Soviet propaganda apparatus had begun a campaign of suggestion and innuendo to falsely link the U.S. to this murder,” says the CIA study. “But Moscow had enjoyed little success without proof to

TOP SECRET

OPERATIONS MEMORANDUM


TO: THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON Date: March 28, 1977

FROM: EMBASSY IN CAIRO

SUBJECT: POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS IN EGYPT

REF: W.O.-C-7935-N-77

With reference to my previous reports and the new guidelines discussed in Washington, I have paid close attention to political developments here with special emphasis on how the Sadat Government is tackling the problems posed by the January disturbances. As time passes, it becomes clear that two major factors helped trigger the January riots: for the first time over a long period, President Sadat came up against the opposition of his advisors, and the Cabinet displayed a large degree of ineptness. President Sadat's attempts to blame the communists and Nasser followers for the January events failed miserably and was poorly received even as a propaganda ploy. A recent reshuffle was tantamount to carrying out an open admission that serious differences persist in the Cabinet. The information and of welfare openly do not support policy and, in particular, political matters. In January, there have been reports of President Sadat's still in crisis. A massive economic upheaval, corruption. Unfortunately, given by us which...



Soviets manufactured a series of authentic-looking State Department memos criticizing Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and suggesting that the U.S. would soon abandon him.